

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

Rangelands Focus Group

**Minutes
January 15, 2008**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
J.R McCollister	Public Member
Chuck Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Bill Burrows	Landowner / Rancher
George Work	Landowner / Rancher
Kenneth Baldwin	Consultant
Larry Ford	Consultant
Ron Eng	Department of Food And Agriculture
Eric Huff	Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

Chuck Pritchard called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Introductions of all present were made. Jeff Stephens informed the RMAC that a quorum of members in good standing was not present in regards to any proposed actions requiring a vote of the membership.

Item 3, Review of the November 2007 Minutes:

Corrections were noted by Jeff Stephens. Approval of the minutes was deferred to the meeting of the full committee.

Item 4 Discussion on the Control of Noxious Weeds as Related to State Equipment Operations

Copies of the draft letter to CDFA were distributed to the membership and attending public. Ron Eng suggested addressing the letter to Larry Bizark with CDFA. Mr. Eng stated that the letter as written is appropriate. Further discussion and final approval was deferred to the full committee meeting on January 16th.

Item 5 Draft Board Policy Number 12: Guidance on the Certified Rangeland Manager Program

Agenda items 6 and 7 were also addressed under Item 5 as related topics.

Chuck Pritchard asked Larry Ford to initiate discussion. Mr. Ford indicated that he was not prepared to comment on Draft Policy 12 since the full Certification Panel has not had an opportunity to review all documents sent to them by RMAC.

Larry Ford stated that he is the newly appointed Chairman of the Certification Panel. He welcomed comment from RMAC on Panel issues and urged RMAC to make direct contact.

Mr. Ford distributed a summary of accomplishments made by the Certification Panel.

Larry Ford explained his interpretation of the need for a Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) on private land. A person may practice range management on property they own regardless of whether it is a forested landscape and regardless of whether they are a CRM. A person that represents themselves as a CRM is bound by the authority of the Board when practicing on lands with a "forested landscape." He stated that certification is a license to practice. He also expressed his opinion that certification should apply to Federal personnel that practice on private (non federal) land such as Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) agents.

Ken Zimmerman asked if Eric Huff had any new information regarding the requirement for a CRM. Mr. Huff reinforced that a CRM is not required in the same manner as a Registered Professional Forester; however, he further stated that it was the Board's intent to describe the circumstances when a CRM should be used.

Ken Zimmerman made the point that ultimately it is the conflict that arises by a person with national certification coming into California and finding no need or value of becoming certified by California.

Chuck Pritchard proposed exploring the possibility of having just one license at the national level that would satisfy California ecosystems as well. Larry Ford countered that California grazing ecosystems are quite different than other areas of the country.

Larry Ford indicated that he had received some complaints concerning the Panel being nonresponsive to applicants and delays in the application process. He investigated but could find no written record of this occurrence, and the person in question failed to respond when contacted.

Larry Ford intends make several changes in exam procedures: One is to ask the individuals preparing the exam to consider questions that cover more than just annual grasslands. Second, is to solicit questions from outside of the Panel including RMAC. He suggested RMAC work on the questions as a group and funnel them through RMAC members also belonging to the Panel. Third, water quality is recommended to be included within future questions. Fourth, he noted that many good rangeland managers do not meet the educational requirements and can not take the exam. Larry Ford made a proposal about a year ago to provide for a challenge exam but it was not pursued. Currently an individual may submit written evidence that they possess the knowledge required to take the exam.

Larry Ford noted a serious shortage of universities turning out candidates for Certified Rangeland Manager with a degree in Range Management. He stated that he would be willing to review candidate applications and their course work ahead of the examination to determine if classes taken may in fact be similar to standard range courses.

Scott Carnegie recommended that the CRM Program adopt procedures identical to the Registered Professional Forester's (RPF) Exam. There would be no need for a challenge exam. Applicants could qualify based on education and experience or experience with sufficient number of years in the profession. Larry Ford stated he would bring this approach before the Panel.

Larry Ford stated that the Certification Panel is considering giving the CRM exam at the Cal-Pac Society of Range Management (SRM) meetings which would be more convenient for those taking and giving the exam. There are also workshops proposed by the CRM Board of Directors to assist in preparing applicants for the exam.

Regarding administration of the CRM Program Larry Ford stated:

The Panel is asking for a rebate of CRM renewal fees to assist with testing and grading. Cal-Pac SRM is also attempting to strengthen the requirements for continuing education. The Panel will be requesting that State RPF Licensing take over record keeping of continuing education for current CRMs. CRMs would be required to submit evidence of continuing education and the Panel would be responsible for verification of courses.

The Certification Panel will meet mid March. Ken Zimmerman asked that the Panel's deliberation on Policy 12 be sent to RMAC before the next RMAC meeting. Larry Ford confirmed that he would. Mel Thompson asked about further response to the RMAC letter to the Panel dated July 12, 2007. He specifically noted the call for other issues to be included in the CRM exam such as water quality and competing rangeland values.

Ken Zimmerman expressed appreciation to Larry Ford for appearing before RMAC and sharing the information on the examination process for CRMs.

Eric Huff stated that the regulations for the CRM needs to be updated; specifically 1651(c). It sets forth the qualifications for becoming a CRM and mentions November 4, 1993 as the standard for qualification. This date and the qualifications are out of date with the Cal-Pac Certification Panel website. An update of the regulation is on the calendar for rule making, but has been delayed due to other more pressing issues before the Board. His point is that a process does exist for making modifications to the stated qualifications as seen by the Board. He also reinforced that it is a license for consumer protection, not just a designation as range manager.

Chuck Pritchard asked Ron Eng to make a few comments regarding the letter that was addressed to CDFA on noxious weeds. He stated that Larry Bizark is the appropriate person to address the letter and concurred that the letter is appropriate as written.

Chuck Pritchard moved the discussion to agenda item 8

Item 8 Using Livestock as a tool for Vegetation Management. Experience from a Central Coast Rancher

Chuck Pritchard introduced George Work, a Central Coast rancher that has been using cattle as a means to manage brush species. Mr. Work is here at Chuck Pritchard's invitation. Mr. Work distributed a packet of information pertaining to his subject. The

packet is on recode with RMAC. George Work made reference to Dan Dagget's book, "Garden of Eden" and recommended it as a thought provoking work.

When proposed in 1992 his son's plan was to crush chemise brush with cattle. He showed scenes using 120 cows with hay and salt as the attractants. A surprising result was the presence of perennial grass under the brush once released. The impact from the treatment can be seen 16 years later.

Mr. Work promoted the use of cattle to graze exotic weeds. Making the target species 20% of the diet would have the potential of control or eradication. He also mentioned the use of cattle for recovering lands impacted by mining. Mr. Work emphasized that our focus should be on the outcome and not landowner assistance programs. In other words the outcome determines revenue provided by the program.

JR McCollister asked what the objective was for these treatments. George Work confirmed that it was deer habitat and that grass production was a bonus. He stated that the cost of this treatment is minimal in relation to the cost for fire suppression or even a control burn. There is an added benefit to the rancher of providing a high quality source of protein in the form of browse. Jeff Stephens asked if Mr. Work could imagine cattle being used economically in a substantial way to control vegetation. Chuck Pritchard cited examples where cattle have been conditioned to browse brush successfully. Mr. Work agreed that it would be possible especially on neighboring properties. He further recommended that small demonstration projects would be useful for selling the concept.

Mr. Work was asked by RMAC if there is a different way of looking at management that has lead him to his current approach to managing land. He responded stating that holistic management is largely responsible for his current approach which he defined as a "value driven, thought process, that causes decisions to be made that are ecologically, economically, and socially sound which result in an increase in biodiversity." Bill Burrows concurred with the definition.

Mr. Work suggested that we capitalize on the carbon sequestration issue for fuels management using livestock and drew comparisons with the high cost of suppression as compared to the minimal amount spent on prevention through fuels management.

Bill Burrows commented on the valuable role herbivores have played in impacting vegetation through history; however, one must factor in the needs of the animals, and provide managers that are competent enough to use animals in an effective manor.

George Work asked what role the Board of Forestry may play in promoting fuel management and whether they have funding. Eric Huff responded stating that the Board can provide support in writing; however they do not have funding for projects. Ken Zimmerman commented that the real missed opportunity is maintaining areas that have already burned recently, and cited areas in the south that have repeatedly burned.

Mel Thompson noted that the California Rangeland Coalition (CRC) is looking for projects and asked if he has approached the Coalition. Mr. Work said he had not but noted that the CRC meets next week and he may attend. Chuck Pritchard recommended contacting GLCI as a possible funding source for projects.

Item 9, New and Unfinished Business

Chuck Pritchard passed out a memo from the Executive Director of the Upper Salinas Las Tables RCD critical of the position taken by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on the California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan (CRWQMP). He asked that RMAC review the memo in preparation for tomorrow's meeting. Ken Zimmerman cited discussions that he had had at the CCA Convention with Noelle Cremers, Tracy Schohr, and Susan LaGrande concerning reports before the CCA that Tier 1 (CRWQMP) was no longer a viable option for ranchers. Further discussion was deferred to the Full RMAC meeting scheduled for the next day.

Item10, Public Comment

None

Meeting adjourned